

Tips for Increasing Parent Workshop Attendance

Brought to you by Channing Bete Company. For over half a century, we've helped our customers communicate practical and targeted messages that help people improve the quality of their lives.



As you know, parents are a powerful resource for improving the lives of children and creating safer, healthier neighborhoods. And while many parents want to be involved, they often don't know why they should attend your workshop or event.

If you're looking for ways to increase attendance for your parent training and outreach programs, here's a list of strategies and tips to get you started.

Step One: Make sure your announcements explain the *benefits* of the event.

- Many advertisements for events tell the what, where, and when, but leave out the why. Make sure parents are shown what they will learn, and how it will help their child.
- If you are using a purchased program, borrow from the promotional literature.
- Make sure your announcement communicates your excitement about what you are doing. There's nothing wrong with saying things like, "We have an exciting, interactive, and informative event planned, and now we just need you!"
- Be clear about the time commitment—and how investing that time will pay off.

Step Two: Make the event convenient.

- Hold the event in a central, recognizable location—preferably somewhere that people can get to using public transportation (or offer driving directions, provide free parking, or organize carpools).
- Try to arrange on-site child care, or provide activities for children to do while their parents attend the workshop.
- Advertise that food will be served—many local establishments will donate pizza or some other meal or snack in exchange for recognition in the press.
- Tie in a sample session with an existing school event—like a back-to-school night.



Step Three: Get the word out!

- Put social networking to work for you! Popular Web sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are easy and effective ways to promote your event. Create a page for your event or ask others to share details with their social networks. You can also ask participants to write comments about their experiences—you can use them in future promotions!
- Create a press release that can be distributed to newspapers, television and radio stations, and other media outlets. It's easier than you think—visit www.channing-bete.com/special-pdfs.html to read our tips paper on “Making the Most of Press Releases.”
- Place advertisements in school news bulletins.
- Contact local radio and TV stations to see if they'll create a free public service announcement—most will if you just ask.
- Put up posters in community centers, supermarkets, and other public places.
- Send your announcements to schools in your area and community service and faith-based organizations, each with a handwritten note asking for it to be included in their next newsletter or e-mail.
- Ask local grocery stores if you can stuff their shopping bags with brochures—especially if they are program sponsors.
- Have sponsors advertise in their own newsletters, mailings, and meetings.
- Ask your local paper to create a feature story about your workshop and what you are trying to accomplish.
- Distribute brochures to parents about the positive outcomes of attending parent workshops (e.g., improved test scores and academic achievement, less misbehavior in school, and improved family management).
- Remember to thank your sponsors and donors!

Don't stop here!

For **free** access to more information on developing your community outreach and communication goals, visit:

www.channing-bete.com/special-pdfs.html

Step Four: Make the event personal.

- Have children make personal handwritten invitations to send out.
- Have teachers, counselors, or PTA/PTO members make personal phone calls to invite parents.
- Hold trainings at someone's home, and have a potluck.
- Alter the program name to suit your audience (e.g., if you're using the Supporting School Success® program, you could call it “How to Help Your Child Succeed in School”).
- Offer a completion certificate to foster a feeling of achievement.

Step Five: Make it fun.

- Ask local businesses to sponsor your program and donate gift certificates or merchandise to be raffled as prizes at each workshop session.
- Offer a grand prize for families who attend all the sessions.
- Create a sense of urgency—for example, by advertising that space is limited and that prizes will be given to the first families who sign up.
- If you have any local celebrities, such as sports or media personalities who have children in the school system, invite them to welcome parents to the first workshop session (and maybe sign autographs).

These ideas are just the beginning; use them as a jumping-off point to rev up your parent workshops and programs. When parents are active in their children's lives, everyone wins—parents, children, schools, and communities!

About us

Channing Bete Company offers a variety of motivational, easy-to-use solutions for parent education. Learn more at the links below.

Find prevention programs focusing on family management, school success, drug prevention, and more at:

www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/

Teach positive discipline, family management, and other parenting skills with the resources at:

www.channing-bete.com/human-services/parenting.html

Get parents involved in their children's education with the booklets, handbooks, and other materials at:

www.channing-bete.com/education/parent-involvement.html